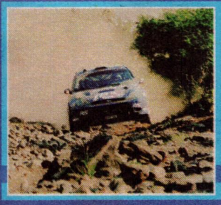
No 673 August 4, 2002

THE FUNDAY TIMES

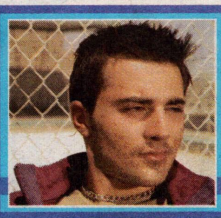
Go to the Ball
Meet the brave girl who got to meet the stars of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Page 3



Totally driven
Funday follows the Ford rallying team during the gruelling Safari Rally in Kenya

Page 6

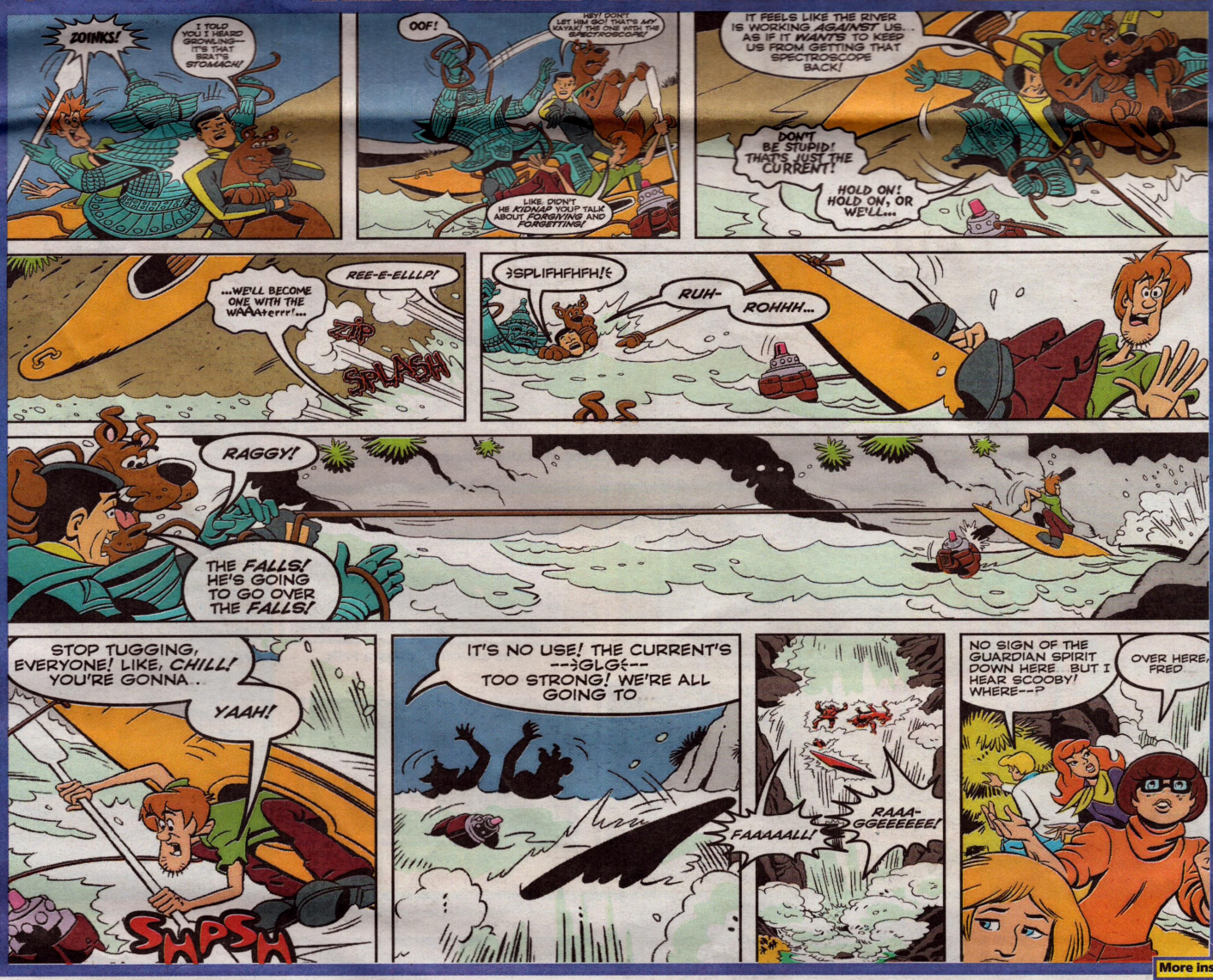


Darius delivers
The Pop Idol and Popstars survivor talks to Buzz! about his debut single

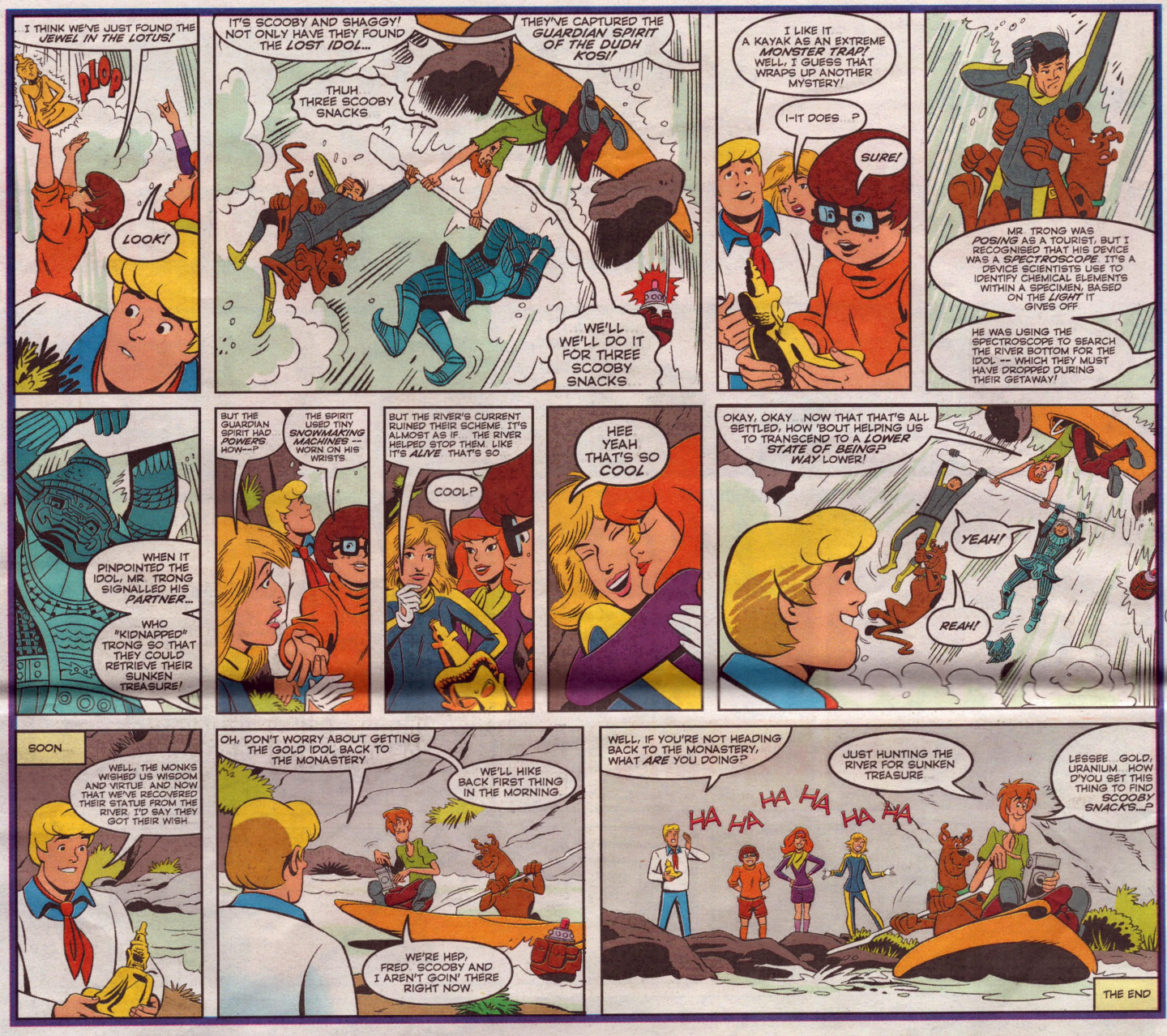
Page 9

SCOOBY-DOO! in KAYAK ATTACK

The story so far – While on a kayaking holiday in Nepal, Scooby and the gang cross paths with the Guardian Spirit

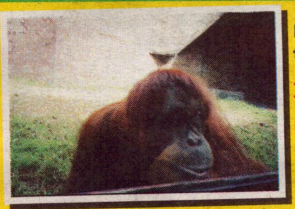


More inside

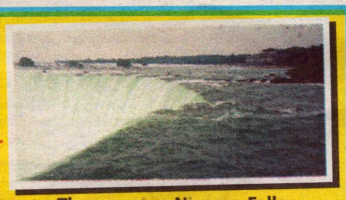


SNAP HAPPY SUMMER

Here are some of the best summer snaps from this week's postbag!



My trip to the zoo
Joanna Turner, Manchester



The amazing Niagara Falls
Suzanna Franaszczuk, 12, Wembley

We spotted this sunbathing lion in Kenya
Rachael Neillie, Glasgow

Having a swinging time!
Ashley Philip, 7, Uphall

Keep sending your photos to: Snap Happy Summer, The Funday Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E98 1ST. Please write your name, age and address on the back, taking care not to damage the photo.

Courtesy of Argos, our overall summer winner will receive an Olympus Superzoom 160, 35mm camera worth £199.99 [check it out at argos.co.uk using catalogue number 561/83180]. Look out for more fun photos next week!

Scooby and the gang start a new mystery next week!

FUNDAY NEWS

Kids theatre

Kids Week [August 23-30] aims to encourage youngsters aged 5 to 16 to experience the magic of theatre for free. To launch the event in style, The Children's Wish Foundation organised a trip for nine-year-old Charlotte Burns [right] to see Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. Charlotte, who suffers from cystic fibrosis, got to ride over the audience in the famous car along with the show's star, Michael Ball. "I was a bit nervous because it was quite scary," says Charlotte. "But it was a great experience and I had the best day." Tickets to participating shows, including Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, We Will Rock You and My Fair Lady are available now from the Kids Week hotline on 0870 444 6066 or on www.kidsweek.co.uk

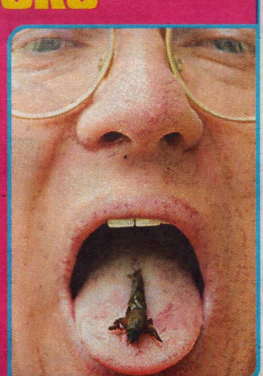
PICTURES: PAYUI MOK, PA/MARTIN RICKETT

Smells fishy

Dinner guests at Carlisle Castle were recently treated to a 2,000-year-old Roman recipe for tunny fish paste. The paste, a popular delicacy for Roman officers, blends cooked tuna with dates, honey, vinegar, spices and herbs and is served with hard-boiled eggs. "It looked like something Baldrick would have served Blackadder. Actually it looked just like mud – lumpy mud," said one diner. The guests were served the fishy "treat" to celebrate the Roman discoveries at English Heritage's nearby Millennium Dig.

Six-legged snacks

Staff at Liverpool Museum's Natural History Centre were indulging in a snack with a difference last month as they tucked into an interesting array of ... insects! Delicacies available at the Edible Insects event included water beetles, crickets, locusts and grubs. The insects are either roasted or covered in chocolate before being served up. "These insects have been bred for eating and are wholesome and nutritious," says Mike Graham, the centre's curatorial manager. "People think nothing about eating prawns and shrimps, so why not insects? In some cultures many people get much of their nourishment from these tiny creatures."



Funday News returns in full next week!

NOW SHOWING
at the bfi London IMAX® Cinema

LONDON IMAX CINEMA
GO THERE

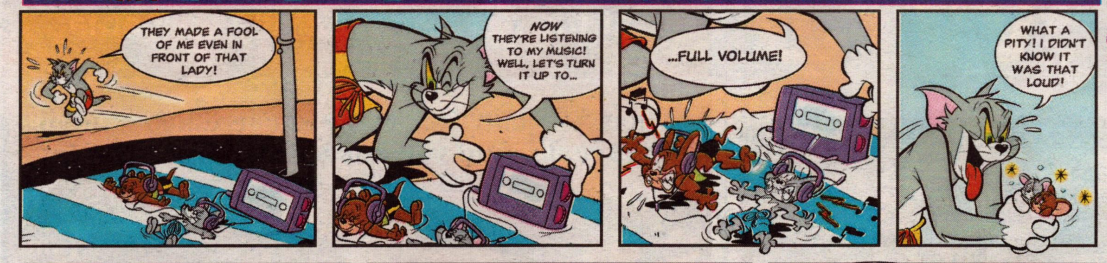
For information or to book tickets call 020 7902 1234

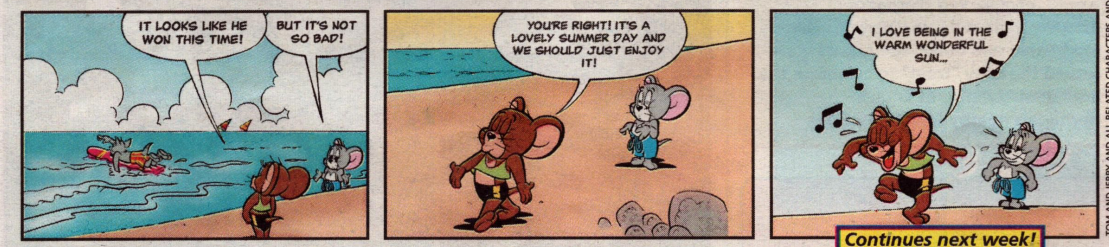
bfi London IMAX® Cinema, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XR
Website: www.bfi.org.uk/imax
Email queries: imax.cinema@bfi.org.uk

© IMAX® is the registered trademark of IMAX Corporation.

TOM AND JERRY — A DAY AT THE BEACH

The story so far – Tom is getting very hot and bothered after Jerry and Tuffy made him look a fool in front of a lady

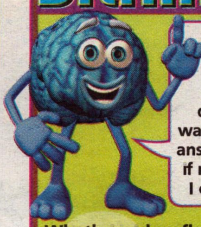




Continues next week!

TOM AND JERRY AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © TURNER ENTERTAINMENT CO. (S02)

BRAINBOX



I'm Brainbox – the Funday boffin! Send in a puzzling question you want to know the answer to and see if my friends and I can answer it.

What's inside a flower bulb?
Neil Kelly, 10, Monkstown

Bulbs contain a plant in compressed form. There is a flower bud or several buds, leaf buds, root initials and reserves of food. There are also "sensor" mechanisms, so that the bulb can sense the environment around it, which only begin growing after experiencing the correct level and duration of external conditions. A hyacinth needs warmth in the summer for the buds to grow and cold in winter to begin stem growth. Corms, rhizomes and tubers are other strategies plants use to grow in a similar way to bulbs. Corms, such as crocus, look a lot like bulbs but are actually made up of compressed stems, not leaves. Rhizomes [eg some kinds of iris] and tubers [eg potatoes or dahlias] grow underneath the ground, the first being formed from underground stems and the second from swollen roots.

PICTURE WWW.GARDENPICTURE.COM

Answer by Guy Barter, head of Horticultural Advisory Services at the Royal Horticultural Society. www.rhs.org.uk

If you have a question for Brainbox, write to: Brainbox, The Funday Times, PO Box 495, London E98 1ST or e-mail brainbox@sunday-times.co.uk

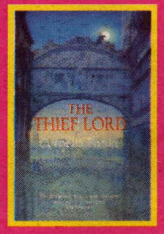
Jarvis

©KNIGHT FEATURES

What antics have you been up to on the beach? Write in and tell us!

STOP THIEF!

With more than 40 books to her name in Germany, author Cornelia Funke has just published her first novel in the UK – The Thief Lord



Why did you choose Venice as the setting for The Thief Lord?

I first had the idea for the book when I was actually in Venice. I woke up and thought: "I'm going to write a story about a boy who wants to be grown up, a boy who is the opposite of Peter Pan."

There's a carousel in your story which turns old people young, and young people old, when they ride it. Would you ever dare to take a spin?

No, definitely not! I'm an adult and that's what I always wanted to be – I wouldn't want to be a child again. As a child I never liked being told what to do. Although my parents were terribly strict, I always wanted more freedom – to go to adventurous places and do exciting things. Now, as an adult, I can do all the things I wanted to do – like come to England!

The children in The Thief Lord all hide out in an old abandoned cinema. Where did that idea come from?

When I was staying in Venice my husband and I were walking around looking for a cinema so we could go to a movie. We walked into a bar and asked: "Where's the cinema?" A girl replied: "There was one once but it's closed down." But we walked around until we found it, and sure enough, it was closed down. So I used that little cinema in my book.

You love movies, don't you?

Yes, I have about 400 DVDs at the moment. I watch them in the evening. I write, read and answer letters all day long, and then in the evening I have a break and I always watch a movie or read a book.

There's talk of a movie version of The Thief Lord now, isn't there?

Yes, we've been talking to Warner Brothers about a movie version. They're the people who made Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. They asked me to be involved, but I don't want it to be a production like Harry Potter. I thought the movie was well-crafted, but it wasn't inspired, not like The Lord of the Rings, for example. I will be involved but I don't want to write the screenplay. I'm too busy with my books.

In Germany, you're the second most popular children's author behind JK Rowling. Do you think you might ever catch her up?

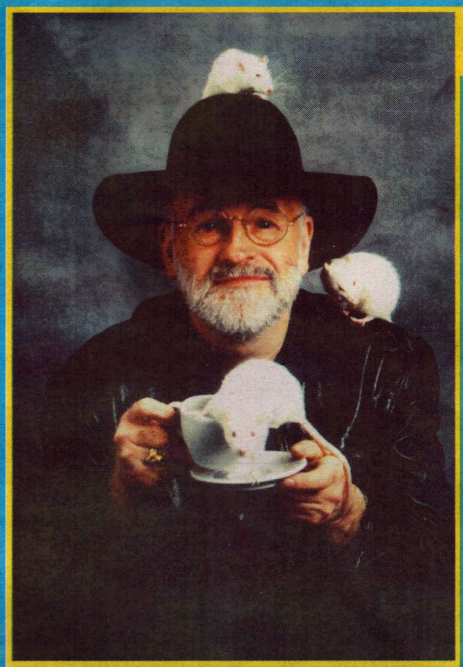
Oh, I don't know about that! JK Rowling has sold millions and I can't even dream of figures like that. But The Thief Lord has sold more than 100,000 copies in Germany in hardback, so I'm very pleased with that.

You answer all your own fan letters still, don't you?

It's great because I get hundreds of letters in Germany and I answer them all – every one. There are so many now, it takes up more and more of my time! But I always love to hear from children who have enjoyed my books – it gives me a real thrill.

WORDS: DAMIAN KELLEHER

The Cat That Got the Cream!

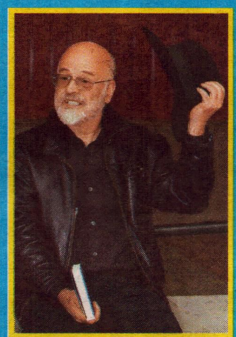


PICTURES: PA/MATTHEW FEARN, AP/FERNANDO PROIETTI

Damian Kelleher talks to top author Terry Pratchett about his Carnegie Medal-winning book – The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents

Congratulations Terry. It's great to see a really funny fantasy book winning the Carnegie award.

The Amazing Maurice has got quite a few jokes – and casual cannibalism, of course! But I hope it's not all funny. The humour comes from the plot and the circumstances. It's good to prove that fantasy isn't just about wizards and silly wands, too.



There's a great picture [left] of you on the jacket with rats running all over the place!

Thank goodness I wore my stunt hat that day! It's made of thicker, heavier material and I had my leather jacket on. Rats are great wrigglers – it's what they do best.

They look a lot tamer than the rats featured in The Amazing Maurice, don't they?

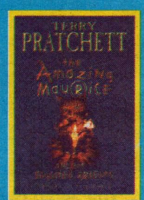
Well, real rats can be pretty foul creatures – that's got a lot to do with where they live. It's probably quite hard to get really wild looking rats, though you do see them in horror movies all the time, don't you? Those rats must make a lot of money!

You write children's and adult books but they seem to appeal to everyone in the end, don't they?

Kids these days are very clued up. They see a lot of movies, and they know exactly what's going on. They know how writers think, so you have to keep trying to outwit them all the time. I don't kid myself that children don't understand.

You didn't start reading books until you were 10, did you?

Yes, The Wind in the Willows got me started. It's one of the weirdest children's books ever written! I mean, there's a rat and a mole. Just think what size they are, yet they can burrow into little holes, and then there's this toad who can drive a car! They can talk, but the horse that pulls the caravan can't. But as a kid you don't care. You just want to get on with the story.

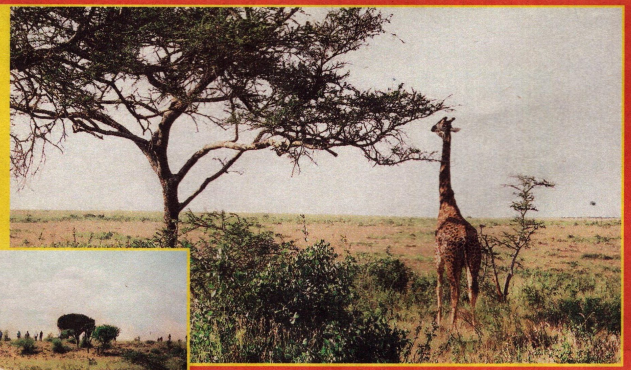


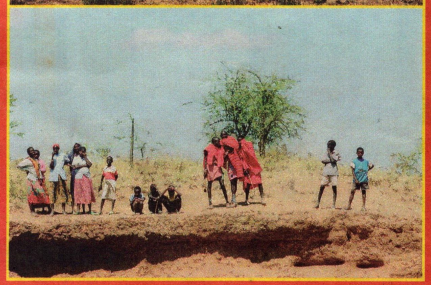
The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents [£12.99] is published by Doubleday

HOT WHEELS

Andy Rollé travels to Kenya to follow the Ford Rallye Sport team during a crucial stage of the World Rally Championship – the gruelling Safari Rally

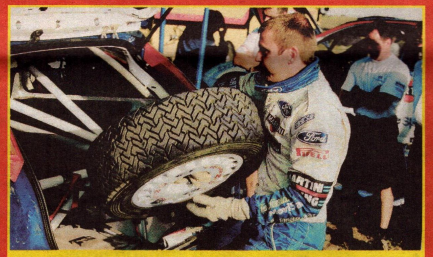
1 Giraffes, zebras and buffaloes are not the usual hazards a world rally driver would expect to face during a championship event. However, the Safari Rally, held in Kenya on the east coast of Africa, is no ordinary rally. Contested in July, during scorching temperatures, and over 2,368km of the world's roughest and most dangerous roads, this spectacular showpiece has earned the reputation of being one of motorsport's ultimate tests.



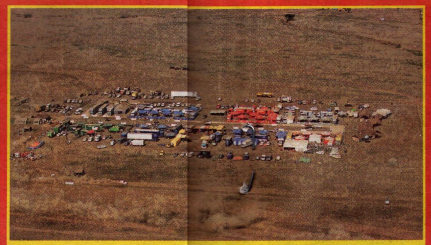


2 "The Safari Rally is an extreme challenge and one that I enjoy very much," says top Ford Rallye Sport driver and former world champion, Colin McRae [above]. "The next three days are going to be an adventure and a severe test of endurance," he adds, before the start of the three-day rally.

3 Colin, 34, from Scotland, is just one member of the 75-strong Ford Rallye Sport team that travels the globe for 11 months of the year during the World Rally Championship. Making sure everything runs smoothly is no easy task for the team as everything has to be meticulously planned up to a year in advance – from how much food will be needed, to the successful transportation of nearly 6,000kg of equipment.

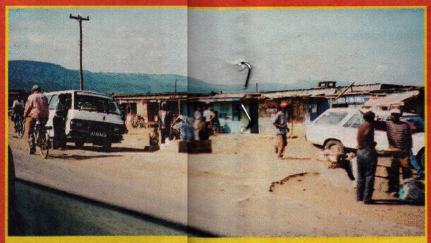


4 The Scottish driver is no stranger to the rugged terrain of Kenya, as this year's event is his eighth Safari Rally. "The best thing about being a rally driver is the thrill of driving a car as fast as possible," Colin reveals. "With every rally there are a lot of dangers and risks, but it is my job to try and limit those, but I'm very competitive and I like to win, so sometimes it's hard to hold back. One thing is for sure though, you can't allow yourself to be scared."

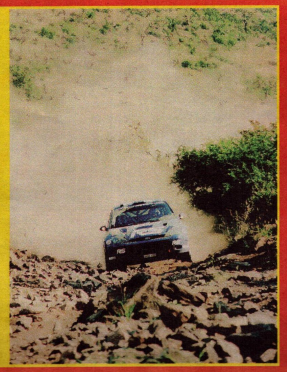


5 During the Safari Rally each driver has a helicopter flying ahead of them. "When we are out there rallying we are in constant contact with the helicopter. We are travelling at more than 100kph so it's vital that we know if there are any roaming animals or obstacles on the road ahead," says Colin. "If they spot any, they will then warn us and then we can take measures to avoid them." Here's a helicopter's-eye view of the action!

6 The drivers also have a co-driver sitting alongside them. Their role is vital to the success of the team, as they have to ensure that the driver knows exactly what is coming up on the course. "Colin and I test each stage out a couple of days prior to the start," reveals Nicky Grist, co-driver for Colin. "It is my job to write down every bump and bend and then, when we are racing, I can inform Colin what is approaching, what gear we need to be in, and how fast we can take that particular stretch."

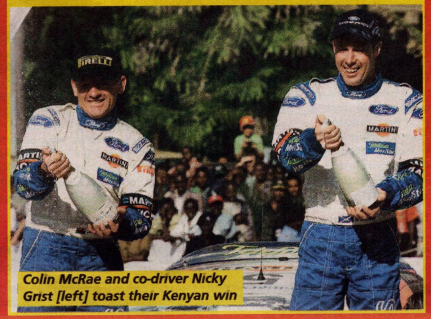


7 The 2002 Safari Rally is the race's 50th anniversary and Prince Edward is in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi [above], to officially open the event. The first day of action sees a determined effort by Colin and after a tough day of action, in which current championship leader, Marcus Grönholm of Finland, retires, Colin finishes only a few minutes off the lead.



8 The unforgiving dusty roads soon began to take their toll on the cars and, at the end of day two, only 14 cars out of the starting 48 manage to crawl through to the final day. Colin plays safe and it proves a wise move as they run up a two-and-a-half minute lead over the rest of the field. "The car is in excellent condition and I could go quicker, but I don't want to risk it."

9 On the final day, Colin roars through to victory, claiming his 25th, and record-breaking world rally championship win. It was a huge relief. "Today we completed one of the roughest stages I've ever done," says the Scotsman. "It was very rocky out there and I'm glad it's all over. I'm delighted to have won, and now I have my sights set on the next rally in Finland, and also becoming world champion again."

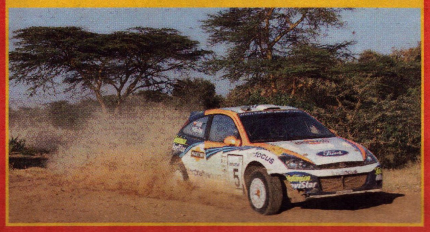


Colin McRae and co-driver Nicky Grist [left] toast their Kenyan win

WORLD RACE

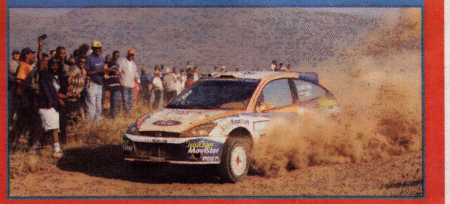
Spanning from January to November, the World Rally Championship [WRC] takes in 14 rallies across four continents. Each event is three days long and covers more than 1,200km. Surfaces can range from asphalt, gravel tracks and forest trails to snow, freezing ice, mud or red dusty earth. Each rally car races against the clock and not each other. The winner is the driver that completes all the stages in the quickest time. There are now just six rallies left this season, starting with this weekend's Finnish rally.

Aug 8-11.	Neste Rally Finland
Aug 22-25.	Deutschland Rally [Germany]
Sept 19-22	Rally San Remo
Oct 3-6	Rally New Zealand
Oct 31- Nov 3	Telstra Rally Australia
Nov 14-17.	Network Q Rally of Great Britain



DRIVING FORCE

World rally cars must be based on family-size road cars, just like the ones you can buy at your local garage. The car that Colin McRae drives is the Ford Focus. The car's maximum engine size is limited to two litres and the power to 300bhp. All of the cars also feature highly sophisticated four-wheel drive systems, plus a robust steel cage survival cell to ensure driver safety. Each car is designed around the driver and the modifications are such, that if you wanted to buy Colin's car, you would be looking at a price tag in the region of £300,000!



NUMBERS GAME

Amazing facts and figures from the Ford Rallye Sport team

163,170 – Average number of gear changes completed by Colin McRae each season

146,370 – Kilometres flown by each team member in a season

11,918 – Meals served by the Ford team catering staff a season

8,925 – Litres of petrol used by each Ford Focus rally car each season

2,356 – Components that make up a gravel specification Ford Focus rally car

1,900 – Tyres used by Colin McRae and team-mate Carlos Sainz during the 2000 season

230 – Top speed [kph] of a Ford Focus rally car

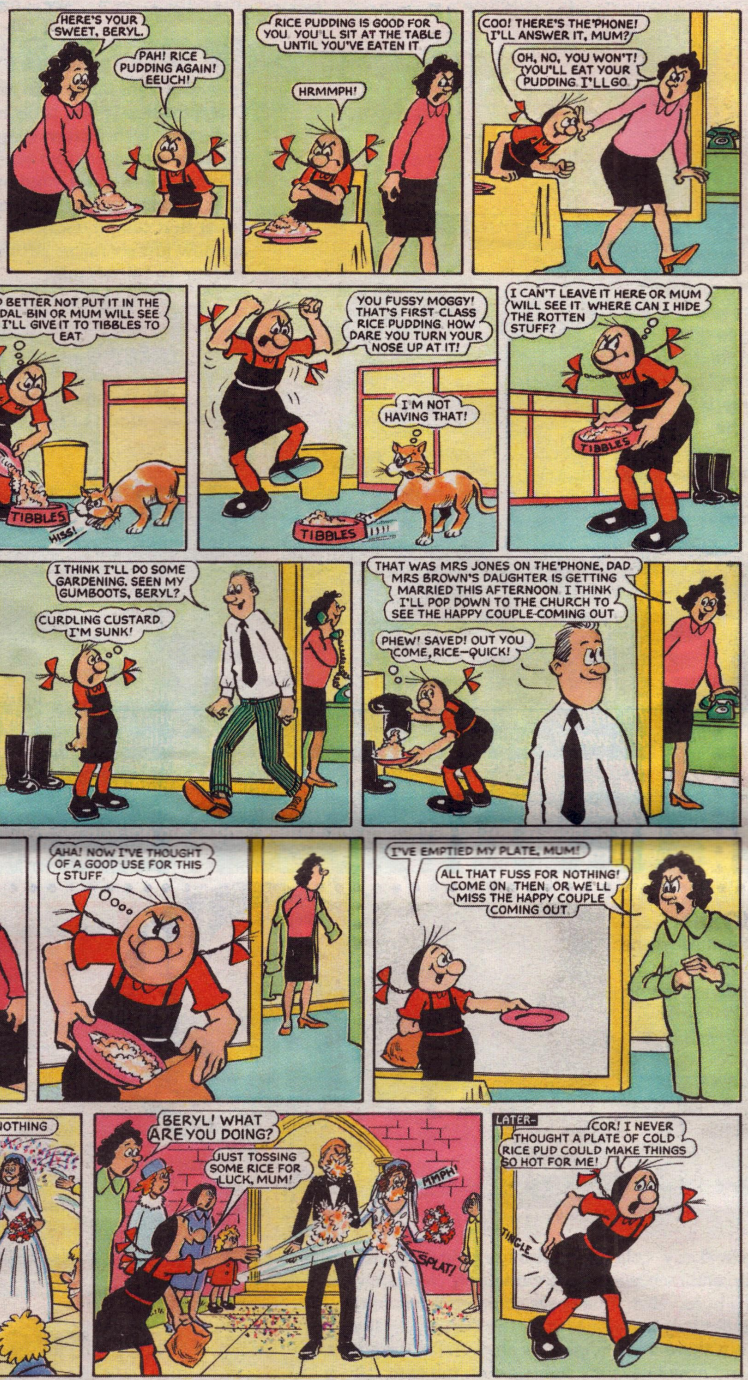
12.6 – Fastest time [in minutes] in which Ford's mechanics have changed a gearbox

4.3 – Seconds taken by a Ford Focus to go from 0-100kph

THE FUNDAY TIMES

BERYL the PERIL

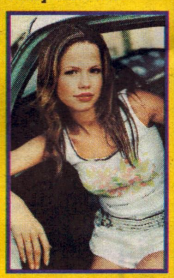
BERYL THE PERIL APPEARS EVERY WEEK IN The DANDY



WEBBY'S WORLD

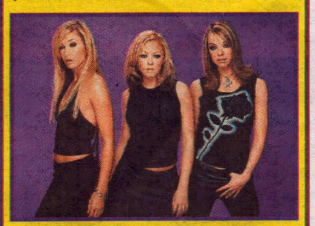
www.tamminsursok.com.au

Home & Away star Tammin – aka Dani Sutherland – has just launched her own site. Fans of the talented South African-born actress [she emigrated to Oz when she was four] will love this stylish site and Tammin's even allowed some embarrassing pics of her when she was younger to appear in the gallery link!



www.atomickitten.co.uk

With each new makeover Liz, Tash and Jenny undergo, their website follows suit! The Kittens website has an older feel to its earlier versions which reflects the girls' more sultry image for It's Okay and new single The Tide Is High [Get The Feeling]. Catch a glimpse of the vid for the new single here, plus all the news on Tash's baby.



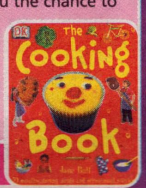
If you are a webhead and have discovered a great site, or have created one of your own, spin me a mail and tell me all about it on webby@sunday-times.co.uk

PICTURE CHANNEL 5

FRESH!

THE COOKING BOOK by Jane Bull ★★★★★

It's not the weather to be stuck indoors but this culinary delight will have you cooking up some tasty summer treats. The Cooking Book [£5 99] has simple, easy-to-follow instructions and colourful pictures, but it's the fun recipes that really prove the icing on the cake. They offer you the chance to get creative in the kitchen ... and to get a bit messy. Upside-down pudding, smooth fruit slurps, moon rocks and mud pie are all included, and are great to make and fun to eat. Delicious!



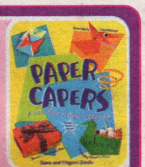
BOOK

STABILO MINI BOSS ★★★★★

Bigger certainly doesn't mean better, just think of those miniature choccie bars that everyone loves to munch! Following this line of thinking is Stabilo's Mini Boss highlighter pen [it's a diddy 6 5cm x 2 5cm] which will have your friends gossiping when the time comes to stock up your new pencil cases for going back to school. Available in pink, green and yellow, look out for them at Staples or Woolworths in packs of three [£2 49] and five [£3 99]. Small but perfectly formed.

STATIONERY

PAPER CAPERS by Steve & Megumi Biddle ★★★★★



Younger Funday readers will find lots to keep their minds [and fingers] occupied with Paper Capers [£5 99]. This paper-folding extravaganza is a great introduction to origami and its step-by-step instructions make sure you don't get your papers in a twist. In fact, it's so forward thinking the book's even got loads of colourful sheets of paper to get you started. With 17 things to make [including a pterodactyl and a fortune teller] this is a bargain activity book to enjoy!

BOOK

Beryl makes a real pudding of things yet again!

FUNDAY BUZZ!

BABY LOVE

WIN

Kioki is from Japan and dreams of being the first Kewpie doll to break into the mainstream music scene – and become a fantastic plastic star. The doll releases his first single tomorrow, Do And Don't For Love. It's a chill-out tune perfect for a lazy Sunday afternoon. We've got five Kioki pink T-shirts and five CD singles up for grabs. To enter, tell us what the capital of Japan is.

Mark you entry KIOKI and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address on page 11.

AT LONG LAST

After Popstars and Pop Idol, Buzz! chats to Darius about achieving success with his single, Colourblind

Hi Darius! You've been in the public eye for ages now. How does it feel to finally release a single?

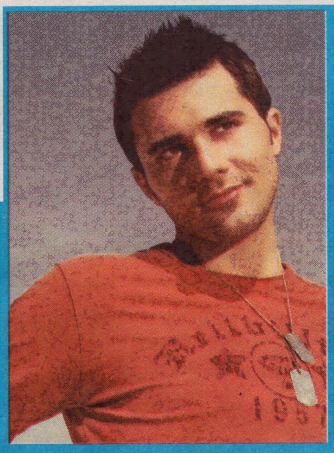
It's incredible! It feels like I've been going on all these scary rides at a theme park – I got off one roller coaster when Popstars finished and got on another with Pop Idol. Now I'm finally releasing a single, it's like I've found an even scarier, bigger and cooler ride. It's very exciting!

What are your big ambitions?

On Popstars I said I wanted a number one single and a platinum album by the time I was 35. But the whole success thing doesn't really matter to me now – I just want to make great pop records and to be happy!

You did Britney on Popstars and Tom Jones on Pop Idol, but who would you be on Stars In Their Eyes?

I'd be me! I'd be the Darius from Popstars with a long wig and a fake goatee beard. That would be so funny! That person seems like someone completely different to me to be honest. But I'd never sing the Britney song again – I couldn't bear that.



What were you like at school?

I questioned everything – and I was very adventurous, too. I was always the first person to climb the tree, fall out and graze my knee. I enjoyed working hard at school, especially when I discovered if I worked hard, I could play hard. if I did well, I'd get rewarded with a trip to the cinema, football or the swimming pool.

You've had quite a few public knock-backs. What advice would you give to our readers who've suffered similar knock-backs?

I believe you have to keep your family and true friends as close as possible to you. Discuss your problems and knock-backs with them and deal with it in a way that shows you won't be trampled on. It's really difficult, but if you believe in yourself and try to be a good person, you'll always end up having the last laugh.

Do you cringe when you look back at the cheesy Darius of Popstars?

No, I laugh! Everyone thought I was crazy when I decided to audition for Pop Idol after what happened with Popstars. My parents were really worried about what the papers might write. It's a bit like being bullied, but on a bigger scale because it's written for everyone to see. I'm not worried what people think about me any more, though. The turning point was when I did Tom Jones on Pop Idol. I thought there was no point in worrying, so I sang it the same way I would've if I was coming out of the shower.

DYNAMITE EXPLOSION!

Ms Dynamite has certainly hit the music scene with a bang. The star already has two chart hits under her belt, she supported Eminem on his London dates and has a reputation for being a mean, lean singing machine – so no messin'! Ms Dynamite uses her silky vocals to sing hard-nosed lyrics but says she's got something positive to give. Set your video to tape the rising garage star in interview on MTV Base, tonight, at 10.30pm.

LIVING ON A PRAYER

Buzz! catches up with Mad'House's 20-year-old Dutch vocalist, Buse

Hi Buse, tell us a little bit about yourself.

I grew up in The Hague, in the Netherlands. When I was young I dreamed of being famous, but wasn't sure what I wanted to do. It's only in the last few years that I decided to become a singer. And I've done it, which is great!

How did you get to record the single?

The idea actually came from the producers, who wanted to record Like A Prayer, but were looking for someone to sing it. They got in touch with my record company, we did a quick vocal test, and they really liked me! So the idea was already there, before I came into the picture.

How did you feel about covering a Madonna hit?

I didn't really feel any extra pressure to measure up to Madonna, I was just thrilled to have the opportunity. No one can match Madonna.

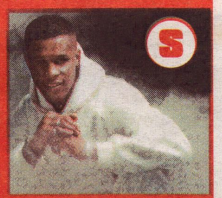
What do you have planned for the next few months?

Well, I'm having a baby quite soon, so I'm just relaxing for the time being. Our album, Absolute Madness, is out in Europe at the moment, and we're hoping to release it in the UK too. Most of the songs on the album are Madonna covers, but we've also covered a couple of other artists.

HOT!

S SINGLE D DVD/VIDEO

ROMEO DUNN Romeo ★★★★



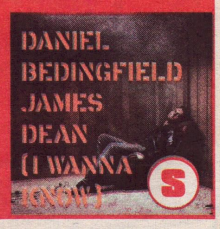
Everyone's eager to hear Romeo's debut solo single, as he's one of the key influences behind So Solid Crew's massive success. His MC-ing was one of the signatures of 21 Seconds, and now he's performing his high-speed yet laid-back vocals on his own. Well, not quite alone, he's roped in fellow So Solid vocalists Lisa Maffia and Tiger S – and the result is a fresh urban summer groove that will please So Solid fans, and find some new recruits.

TONY HAWK'S TRICK TIPS: VOLUME ONE – SKATEBOARDING BASICS ★★★★

In the skateboarding world, they don't come any bigger or better than Tony Hawk. Here the boarding maestro opens with some adrenalin-pumping footage which shows you what you are aiming for as you follow Tony's tuition. But fear not, the main man soon goes back to basics and gives an in-depth guide that starts with the choosing and setting up of your board. Next up is the pushing off and turning, before mastering your first ollie. A real masterclass – complete with gnarly soundtrack.

JAMES DEAN [I WANNA KNOW] Daniel Bedingfield ★★★★★

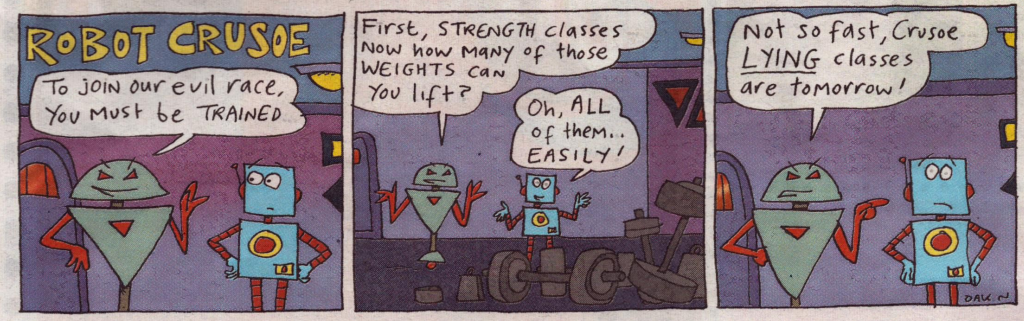
After his number one smash, Daniel went a bit quiet for a while. We heard he was writing for lots of other artists, but what about his own material? If James Dean [I Wanna Know] is anything to go by, it sounds like Daniel's saved his best compositions for himself! Don't expect a repeat of Gotta Get Thru This, James Dean is Daniel's next step in the musical journey he's taking fans on. This is a more raucous and raw-sounding track, something to play with the volume cranked up to the max!



More top pop news in next week's Buzz!

ADVANCE FEATURES

© D.C. THOMSON & CO. LTD. 2002.



NEXT WEEK

PICTURE: DEAN FREEMAN

After a break to find a new band member, Hear'Say return with a new look and a new single, Lovin' Is Easy. We find out more

Funday goes undercover to discover the stars, the secrets and the story behind the movie sequel – Spy Kids 2

Enter our Lord Of The Rings video competition

f-mail

Send your letters, cartoons, jokes and drawings to: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX Send your e-mail to: funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk

MOBILE FUN

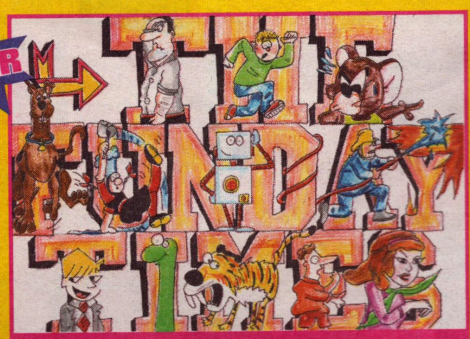
Techno-heads and gadget kings will know that www.mobileshop.com is a top site for buying electronic goodies – including mobile phones, ringtones, cameras and MP3 players.

What they may not know is that the internet shop has teamed up with Funday to make sure that the f-mailers' long summer trips will be full of fun!

www.mobileshop.com is offering the writer of the star f-mail a tip-top Nintendo Game Boy Advance, the ultimate portable games console.

The other f-mailers will receive a Fuji Nexia 60AF instant camera to get snap happy.

STAR



Naomi Baglin, 15, Tavistock

Dear f-mail,

I want to know if other readers suffer because their holidays start earlier than the usual school break. For me, the holiday TV shows start when I'm going back to school and the back to school adverts in the shops are always too late as my mum has always got everything. It seems everything, such as holiday clubs, are aimed at a set of agreed weeks but I'm already well into my holidays now. Some places offer family deals but don't realise how much business they are missing due to the holidays being staggered. Plus, if I see a policeman when I shop with my gran, they ask whether I'm skiving school – but I'm not, I'm on holiday!

Lisa McCrakan, 10, Brierfield

Robot never seems to get it right!

FUNDAY

WIN IT!

COMPETITION ADDRESS Send answers to all competitions to us at: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU95 1AY. **Competition deadline:** August 14

You can e-mail your competition answers to: funday.comps@sunday-times.co.uk
Sorry, but only one e-mail per entrant will be accepted.

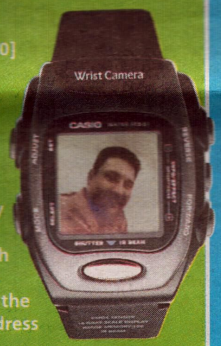
BRIGHT IDEAS

Robinsons Fruit & Barley Bright Ideas Young Inventor Competition, in association with the Science Museum, invites all you bright sparks out there to get thinking! All you have to do is to think of a cool invention and then draw and describe it.

The competition's top prize is £500 to spend at the Science Museum and a VIP trip to London with your family to see your invention displayed at the famous London museum. To enter, pick up an entry form at your local Sainsbury's store, or download one from the Bright Ideas website on www.genius-at-work.com or www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

To get you in the mood to enter, Robinsons is giving four Funday winners a gadget set [worth £500] each containing a fruit-powered clock, a super inventors kit, a camera watch, a pocket TV and a lightning machine.

To enter, tell us who invented the telephone.



Mark your entry INVENTIONS and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

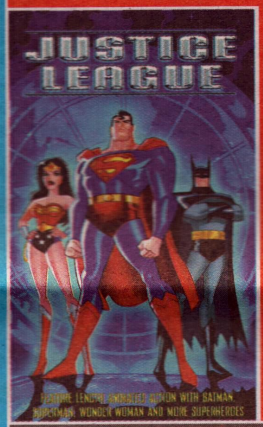
ROBINSONS FRUIT & BARLEY

SUPER TOONS

The most famous comic book heroes of all time including Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Hawkgirl and the Martian Manhunter have joined forces to form an exclusive superpower gang – the Justice League. Out on Warner Home Video tomorrow [£9.99], the Justice League cartoon series is stuffed full of ka-blam!, biff! and ka-pow! Some jobs are just too big for a single superhero and that's when the Justice League get together to out-battle evil.

Warner Home Video and The Animation Art Gallery are offering one lucky reader a limited edition hand-painted Batman and Nightwing production cell and a copy of the video. Another reader will receive a Wonder Woman production cell from the original 1970s series and a copy of the video.

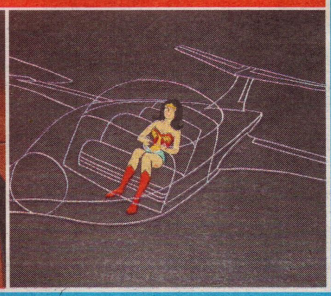
Plus, 10 runners-up will receive a copy of the video.



To enter, tell us the name of Batman's home city.

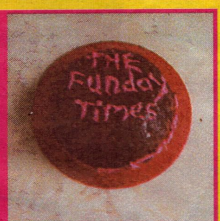
Mark your entry SUPER and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address above.

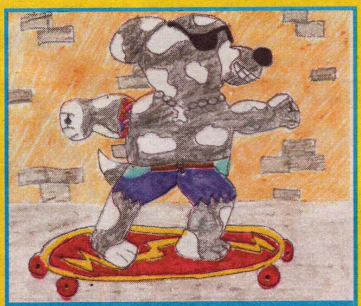
For more information on original artwork from your favourite cartoon series, click on www.animaart.com



Normal TNL competition rules apply to all Funday Times competitions

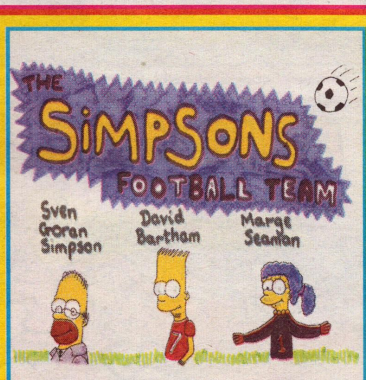
Dear f-mail,
Making cakes is great fun and I don't know why it's not more popular with kids. You can make a cake for any special occasion – birthdays, Christmas, Easter, Hallowe'en or even the release of your favourite magazine! With practice every cake you make tastes better than the last. So f-mail readers, get cake mixing!
Sam Robson, 13, Cardiff





What do you call a dog in a skatepark?
A boarder collie!
Ciara Knowles, 11, Ballyclare

Dear f-mail,
I'm really annoyed at the way one of the coolest shows on TV, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, is dismissed by people as "another Dawson's Creek", or say they only watch it for Sarah Michelle Gellar. Good-looking cast aside, it's one of the coolest, action-packed shows on TV and it always has brilliant story lines. It combines comedy, drama and action into one package, yet it's never recognised for it! Are there any Funday readers who feel the same way?
Joe Bugle, 15, via e-mail



James Morton, 12, Edgbaston

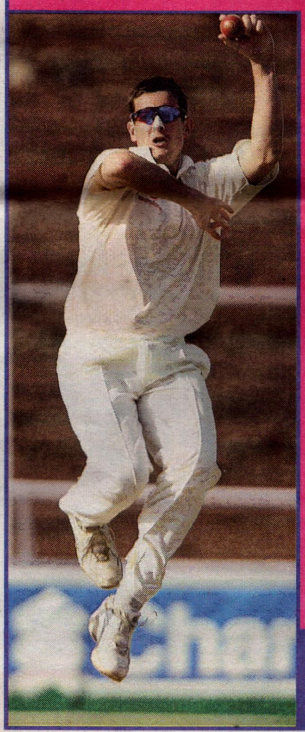
Got a point to make? Write to f-mail!

FUNDAY SPORT

ASHLEY GILES

With the Second Test against India starting this Thursday, Funday Sport meets England's premier spin bowler, Ashley Giles

When did you first play cricket?
Basically from the time I could walk, I had a cricket bat in my hand. I grew up around the village green in Ripley, Surrey, with a family that revolved around cricket in the summer months. My dad, brother, cousins, uncles and grandfather used to play. We would play Saturdays and Sundays. They're great memories – it was fantastic. I suppose, it was a natural progression that I would take cricket up.



Did you watch a Test match as a kid?
Yes, I remember coming to Lord's when I was 11 or 12 to watch a Test and thinking how fantastic it was. It was England versus the West Indies and the atmosphere was brilliant. To see these people in the flesh, who you looked up to, doing their thing close up was great. You realise how quick the game is and how fast the bowlers are.

Did anything in particular stick in the memory?
The West Indies bowled us out cheaply that day, led by Malcolm Marshall – who's sadly passed away now – but he was awesome to watch. He hit a few people on the head that day, it was pretty nasty! It was great to watch someone like that, perform like that.

Did you always intend to be a spin bowler?
No, the biggest turning point in my career was when I turned from a seam bowler to a spin bowler. A guy called Brian Ruby suggested that, at Guildford, when I was playing for a cricket club there. I was quite old at the time, I was about 18, and that turned my life around. I might well not be here, playing for England, if I was the bowler I was before then.

What heroes did you have growing up?
Ian Botham, it would have to be. He was such a character and such a brilliant cricket player. With the bat, with the ball or catching in the slips, he was what any young kid wanted to be.

Can you admire top batsmen, such as Sachin Tendulkar, while playing against him?
Of course. I suppose it's sick really, when he hits you over your head, but you do enjoy playing against him because he is the best in the world and, arguably, the best ever. I've got him out a couple of times which I've really enjoyed.

What has been the most intimidating atmosphere you have played cricket in?
In terms of size of the crowd, it would be Eden Gardens, in Calcutta, which was at least 100,000 people. It was very, very noisy. You would be 2m away from Nasser [Hussain] and you couldn't hear him. Otherwise, Australia is very intimidating in a different way, with verbal abuse from the crowd. I remember playing in front of a packed house at Sydney Cricket Ground and that was intimidating, luckily we won.

Ashley is supporting the new kids cricket initiative – the npower Lions' Den – the special section for kids at each of this summer's Test matches. For tickets to the npower Lions' Den, call the hotline 0870 533 8833 or click on www.thepridside.com

YOUNG LIONS

Do you recognise these England cricket stars? Thanks to the npower Lions' Den, Funday has pictures of current Test stars when they were young. See if you can name them.

PICTURES PA/REBECCA NADEN

ANSWERS

1 MATTHEW HOGGARD. 2 ALEX TUDOR. 3 ANDREW FLINTOF
4 ASHLEY GILES. 5 MARCUS TRESCOTHICK. 6 MICHAEL VAUGHAN.

JUMP KINGS

Team Extreme, the most experienced show in the world for BMX, skateboarding, snakeboarding and in-line skating, is performing daily at Alton Towers until September 1 as part of its national tour.

Hot Wheels and Tyco R/C are offering one winner a family ticket [two children, two adults] to watch Team Extreme perform at Alton Towers . The prize includes overnight accommodation at the Alton Towers Hotel, a day at the park, plus travel expenses. For more info on the park, click on www.altontowers.com

Plus, three runners-up each get a Shark Park, Mini X-Treme Cycle and a Robo Wheels.

To enter, tell us what you need to perform a grind.

Mark your entry EXTREME and send it, with your name, age and address, to the competition address on page 11.

©Times Newspapers Ltd. 2002. Artwork and transparencies are submitted at the owner's risk and neither The Sunday Times nor its agents accept any liability for loss or damage. Published and printed and licensed for distribution in electronic and all other derivative forms by Times Newspapers Ltd. PO Box 495, Virginia Street, London E98 1ST, UK, tel 020 7782 5000, and also printed at Kilting Road, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 9HN, UK. Not to be sold separately from The Sunday Times.